AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended).

Longitudinal shaft, particularly for use in automobiles having all-wheel drive or rear-wheel drive, comprising a gearbox-side articulation (5), a differential-side articulation (6), and a central articulation (4), each of which has an inner hub (15, 18) and an outer hub (7, 11, 12) that surrounds the former at least in some regions, whereby two shaft segments (2, 3) of the longitudinal shaft (1) are connected with one another so as to rotate together, by way of the central articulation (4), ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the inner hubs (15, 18) of the gearbox-side articulation (5) as well as of the differential-side articulation (6) have a central bore (16, 22) provided with a plug-in connection (17, 23), to connect the longitudinal shaft (1) for integral rotation, and to center it, on journals (24) of a gearbox output shaft and a differential input shaft, respectively.

Claim 2 (currently amended).

Longitudinal shaft as recited in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the central articulation (4) has an inner hub (15) having a central bore (16) that is provided with a plug-in tooth

system (17), which accommodates a journal (9) of a shaft segment (2) of the longitudinal shaft (1) for plug-in centering for integral rotation.

Claim 3 (currently amended).

Longitudinal shaft as recited in ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the two shaft segments (2, 3) of the longitudinal shaft (1) are configured as shaft tubes, and the outer hubs (7, 11, 12) of the gearbox-side articulation (5), the differential-side articulation (6), and the central articulation (4) are shaped sheet-metal parts directly connected with the shaft tubes.

Claim 4 (currently amended).

Longitudinal shaft as recited in ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the gearbox-side articulation (5) and/or the central articulation (4) are sliding articulations.

Claim 5 (currently amended).

Longitudinal shaft as recited in claim 4, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the sliding articulations (4, 5) together have an assembly displacement path ($2\ l_1 + 2\ l_2$), which corresponds to at least a length (L), with which the gearbox output shaft or the differential input shaft (24) projects into the inner hub (15, 18) of

the gearbox-side articulation (5) or the differential-side articulation (6) in operation.

Claim 6 (currently amended).

Longitudinal shaft as recited in ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the differential-side articulation (6) is a synchronous articulation.

Claim 7 (currently amended).

Longitudinal shaft as recited in ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the gearbox-side shaft segment (2) has a diameter (D_2) that deviates from diameter (D_3) of the differential-side shaft segment (3), in such a manner that the two shaft segments (2, 3) of the longitudinal shaft (1) can be pushed onto one another in the manner of a telescope.